

# *Art & Eros Magazine*



Volume Fifteen: Fall 2024

## **Art & Eros Magazine: Volume Fifteen**

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Cover picture: Portrait of Persephone, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

If you have a submission for the **Art & Eros Magazine** feel free to contact the magazine.

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*My little one  
was born that fall.  
My beautiful daughter ...  
Her name is Emily.*

**To Comfort Me** by Chloe

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## Prologue

Obelisk Press of Vancouver is delighted to publish the Fall 2024 edition of *Art & Eros* Magazine which serves to feature the work of aspiring artists.

In this edition we have several poems about Pomegranates as well as a rendition of the Greek Myth about Persephone. A special thanks goes to Chloe for her poem. This is the first time she has been published. A thanks goes out to all who shared their works with our readers, including Isabella, Ani and Rose. A special thanks to Olivia's and her *Something Very Uncomfortable!*

*Art & Eros* Magazine welcomes submissions on a quarterly basis. Please feel free to submit your short stories, prose, poetry and artwork to

pbruskiewich @ gmail.com

There is no fee to submit. There is no writer's fee provided by the journal for those who submit. The publishing rights remain with the writer.

## New Art



## ***Pomegranates as Allegory by Isabella Montsouris***

[**Montreal**] When I heard that Pomegranates was the theme of this edition of *Art & Eros Magazine* I ran out to buy myself one of these plump and juicy fruits.

When I returned back to my apartment I cut a slit in the pomegranate and set it on the table. Then I put on some relaxing music while I sat and watched as the red juice dripped from the fissure and gathered as a stain on the white plate that it sat on.



As the red stain spread across the plate this reminded me what sets a girl apart from a boy ... how once each month blood spouts from within me.

It would be too crude to call that part of me a Pomegranate, wouldn't it?



No boy can truly understand what it means to be a Pomegranate. No boy can understand what it means to have so many seeds within you that escapes into the world each month awash in a flood of blood.

Sometimes I let a boy I like kiss me down there and I ask them how I taste. Not one of them have said I taste like a Pomegranate.

That's a shame for the first boy who says that of me, well, I might let him do more than just kiss me. I might let him plant his seed inside of me.

***A Man and A Pomegranate by Ani Gavani***











***Pictorial: Who Needs a Man in my Bed?***



## New Prose



## ***Oh La La ... What a Novelty! by Rose Lang***

[Paris] You probably already know that I went to a Catholic all-girls school here in Paris. Most of my teachers were nuns but from time to time a lay person would be one of my teachers. Nuns had a cut and dry philosophy as far as the world is concerned. This all centered on the Catholic notion of original sin.

On a Friday afternoon one spring day we had a substitute teacher for our Catholic Philosophy class. She decided to show us the first episode of Jacob Bronowski's *Ascent of Man* series, put out by the BBC.

The substitute teacher had read Bronowski's book *Ascent of Man* but had not yet watched the BBC video. She had assumed the video would be fine to use as a course resource.

Oops ...A few minutes into the episode something rather 'unique' appeared on the screen. We girls enjoyed it but the teacher stopped the video and well ... we convinced her it was fine for us (we told her we would not kick up a fuss if she just let us watch).

What happened? There for a few seconds was a naked baby boy crawling along and from time to time we could see from what was dangling between his legs that he was a little boy.



The little boy could not be more than a year old. He was cute. As I watched him crawl along I wondered how it felt to him to crawl with his thingy rubbing the carpet. I had once rubbed my sensitive part along a carpet when I was his age and well it didn't feel nice. I knew not to do that again!



We could see his dingle dangle ... his thingy ... every few seconds during a minute or so of the video. But this dangling thingy was a bit too much for some of us tender girls to see and so a few turned away or covered their eyes.

But not me. I could not get enough of this novelty.



I put my hand down the front of my panties, right there in the dark classroom and I tried to imagine where a penis would fit on my body were I a boy. It was a revelation to me to realize that tender c-spot on me was where a boy's thingy was attached. I then started to wonder if their thingy was as sensitive as my c-spot. Many years later I would find out that medical science has

sorted out that my c-spot was in fact much more sensitive than the tip of a boy's thingy.

Perhaps the last camera angle was meant to tease us girls but the rest of his boyhood was shown us and we knew that his marble sack was where our *source de vie* were ...



That Saturday we gathered together at a friends and with platercine we made our own little thingies. After that for days on end I wondered about every boy I saw. It would be that summer that I would finally see a thingy for real.

My neighbor had a six month old baby boy. I asked and she let me watch as she bathed him. It dangled. It wiggled. He peed too ... Oh la la! What a novelty!

## ***The Wanted Guest by Patrick Bruskiewich***

It has been four decades since the story I am about to recount took place. The only thing I have changed are the names, the rest of the story is as truthful as I can remember.

It all starts on New Year's Eve, at a house that five of us, three women and two men, were renting a few minute drive from University. One of the fellows was me and the other was a twenty-some disgruntled postal worker (he was not at the party). The three women included a nursing student, a student taking a Master's in Biology and an artist of Korean heritage. The three women and I had arranged an open door New Years Eve party and had invited many of our friends. An open door party is where everyone is welcome and no one is turned away. You meet very interesting people at an open door party.

This New Year's Eve would prove exceptional.

The Party was suppose to stay on the main floor of the three floor house. The house was vintage 1920's and so it had an above ground basement (which was dusty and musty having never been finished), the first floor with a living room, dining room, two bedrooms, a large bathroom and kitchen – sort of perfect for a family of four, and then three bedrooms and a bathroom on the top floor. My bedroom was on the top floor. The top floor was off limits to our guests, but I noticed a man sort of drag a women up the stairs around 11 and after they disappeared for perhaps ten minutes I drifted up stairs to 'flush them out.'

We didn't want any of the party goers to end up in our beds – oh did I tell you there are no locks on the bedroom doors.

We had decided to keep our bedrooms doors ajar so that it was easy to see which one might be occupied and ... well you guessed it ... my door was closed. I didn't knock as I swung the door open hoping to catch the pair in a compromising situation.

I sort of did. The two were fully dressed. He was forcefully on top of her and she was pushing willfully back. ‘

No ... stop ...’

If I had waited a minute longer she would have lost out.

The man glared back at me and said an expletive ...”get the @#\$\$% out ...”

“I think you are the man who will have to leave. You are in my bedroom, without my permission, and she obviously wants you to stop.”

He held his ground and so she kneed him in the family jewels and then extricated herself and ran past me down the hall and stairs. I did not wait for him to recover from the blow and just said “you have two minutes to leave here or I will call the police.”

Another expletive and then a threat.

“I am an old naval officer and if you take a run at me you’ll be dead before your body hits the ground.”

I stepped back into the hall and stayed out of his way as he staggered down the hallway, and he lurched down the stairs. She had kned him good.

When we got to the bottom of the stairs he wanted to turn left into the party but I pushed him towards the door, which was just to the right.

“Leave or go to jail ... your choice.”

He left.

I looked around but did not see the woman so I figured she might have dashed out the door. I walked back up to my bedroom and started to change into some comfortable clothes (I had just arrived back from a formal sit-down dinner my family had had across town) when there was a tentative knock at the door.

“One moment I am dressing.” I hurried up and then opened the door. It was the woman. I could see she had been crying.

“Can you drive me home?”

I smiled and nodded and away we went. She did not say anything while we drove and I did not want to intrude in her life so I said nothing either. It was obvious to me what the little drama was about.

I dropped her off in front of a comfortable house and she smiled and said thank you and then disappeared into the house. It was only a two minute drive but I understood why she wanted me to chaperone her home. In case the boy was lurking about.

I drove back to the party and did not give their little drama a second thought for the next few hours. Then around one she reappeared at the party and I could see she was even more upset than before. In fact she looked rather frantic.

She rushed to me and said “is there somewhere we can talk in private?” Her eyes went up the stairs, so we walked up the stairs and she followed me into my bedroom. I kept the door ajar as she sat on the bed and I stood opposite her across the room.

“Thanks for coming to my aid. I told him no but he wouldn’t stop.”

“Can I ask you something?” I said.

She nodded.

“Is he your boyfriend?”



She frowned as she shook her head. “No ... I know him. He has a very bad reputation. He has been chasing after me for some time.”

“Oh ... I see ...” I said emphatically.

“No I don’t think you do. I am from Lebanon, from a Catholic community. My family and I just arrived in Canada last year to escape the war in southern Lebanon.”

“Your English is almost perfect.”

“I went to the American school ... until they had to close it last year when the PLO kidnapped some of the teachers.”

“I had read in the news papers about the latest troubles in Lebanon.”

“My father teaches at the university.” When she said father there was a warble to her pronunciation of the word. “My father has tossed me out of the house.”

“Oh my. What’s happened?”

“He told me not to go out on New Year’s Eve and I defied him. But what really angered him was the boy ... that monster ... when he could not get his way with me, he phoned my father and told him we had had sex!”

“Doesn’t your father believe you?”

She shook her head. Her sad eyes filled with tears. I sat next to her and let her cry on my shoulder. “I have no place to go.” She sobbed.

I chirped ...”I don’t think my housemates would mind a holiday guest.”

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*Editor in Chief: Patrick Bruskiewich*

***Pictorial: Keep Your Snake Away From Me!***



## ***Something Very Uncomfortable by Olivia***

[**Los Angeles**] I recently came across this infamous picture titled *Two Girls* in a previous edition of Art & Eros. My friend and I were given ten dollars by Peter Widdison to sit for this picture in 1972. I am the girl on the floor.



I thought I might explain why I am so aroused. This was not just the first time I let a boy see me naked. Peter had me leaning further and further to the right. He wanted my sex as open as possible. Sitting for this picture was *something very uncomfortable!* As you know, Peter got into trouble taking this picture!

## **Art Works from the Modern Era**

***Pomegranates by Minna Keene***



Circa 1910



***Girl with a Pomegranate by William -Aldophe Bouguereau***



Circa 1875



*Study IV, 1969 by Jaroslav Vavra*















***Pictorial: Does This Float Your Boat?***



## **New Poems by Contemporary Poets**



## ***A Crazy Man, Perhaps I've Become* by Patrick Bruskiewich**

With witty waka \*  
In the wind, a crazy man  
Perhaps I've become.  
Don't throw rocks at me, or I  
Will throw loud words back at you.

This first line is borrowed from a Haiku by Basho

With witty waka in the wind  
I must look a little like  
Chikusai now.

A waka is a form of Japanese Classical poetry of 31 syllables in 5-7-5-7-7.

My poem *A Crazy Man, Perhaps I've Become* is a tanka, which is a modern form of waka poetry.

## ***The Pomegranate by Eavan Boland***

The only legend I have ever loved is  
the story of a daughter lost in hell.  
And found and rescued there.  
Love and blackmail are the gist of it.  
Ceres and Persephone the names.  
And the best thing about the legend is  
I can enter it anywhere. And have.  
As a child in exile in  
a city of fogs and strange consonants,  
I read it first and at first I was  
an exiled child in the crackling dusk of  
the underworld, the stars blighted. Later  
I walked out in a summer twilight  
searching for my daughter at bed-time.  
When she came running I was ready  
to make any bargain to keep her.  
I carried her back past white beams  
and wasps and honey-scented buddleias.  
But I was Ceres then and I knew  
winter was in store for every leaf  
on every tree on that road.  
Was inescapable for each one we passed. And for me.

It is winter

and the stars are hidden  
.I climb the stairs and stand where I can see  
my child asleep beside her teen magazines,  
her can of Coke, her plate of uncut fruit.  
The pomegranate! How did I forget it?  
She could have come home and been safe  
and ended the story and all  
our heart-broken searching but she reached  
out a hand and plucked a pomegranate.  
She put out her hand and pulled down  
the French sound for apple and  
the noise of stone and the proof  
that even in the place of death,  
at the heart of legend, in the midst  
of rocks full of unshed tears  
ready to be diamonds by the time  
the story was told, a child can be  
hungry. I could warn her. There is still a chance.  
The rain is cold. The road is flint-coloured.  
The suburb has cars and cable television.  
The veiled stars are above ground.  
It is another world. But what else  
can a mother give her daughter but such  
beautiful rifts in time?  
If I defer the grief I will diminish the gift.  
The legend will be hers as well as mine.

She will enter it. As I have.

She will wake up. She will hold  
the papery flushed skin in her hand.

And to her lips. I will say nothing.

***Pictorial: This is Really Fun!***



***I am a Pomegranate by Amber S.***

I am a pomegranate.

cut me open.

break my outer skin.

inside of me is my fruit.

the meat of me.

hidden.

dig your fingers into me,

pulling me apart.

ripping me to pieces.

I do not want to be

in your mouth.

feel the heat of your breath.

chew me up.

spit me out.

and leave me empty.

## ***How to Cut a Pomegranate by Imtiaz Dharker***

Never,' said my father,  
'Never cut a pomegranate  
through the heart. It will weep blood.  
Treat it delicately, with respect.

Just slit the upper skin across four quarters.  
This is a magic fruit,  
so when you split it open, be prepared  
for the jewels of the world to tumble out,  
more precious than garnets,  
more lustrous than rubies,  
lit as if from inside.  
Each jewel contains a living seed.  
Separate one crystal  
.Hold it up to catch the light.  
Inside is a whole universe.  
No common jewel can give you this.'

Afterwards, I tried to make necklaces  
of pomegranate seeds.  
The juice spurted out, bright crimson,  
and stained my fingers, then my mouth.

I didn't mind. The juice tasted of gardens

I had never seen, voluptuous  
with myrtle, lemon, jasmine,  
and alive with parrots' wings.

The pomegranate reminded me  
that somewhere I had another home.



## ***To Comfort Me by Chloe***

I let him  
come to me  
that night  
to comfort me  
so that later  
he would come  
inside of me, to  
comfort me.

He let me sleep  
alone when he  
left me, with a little  
comfort all inside  
of me.

My little one  
was born that fall.  
My beautiful daughter ...  
Her name is Emily.

***Pictorial: I Love Your Bathing Suit!***



## Prose from the Past

## ***Greek Mythology: Demeter and Persephone***

Aphrodite, goddess of love, looked out across creation. She saw man and woman, god and goddess dancing to her tune. Oh, it was true that Zeus was the king of all the gods and goddesses, but she controlled the hearts of everything; everything on the earth, everything in the sea, everything in the sky.

She called her son, little Eros. She cuddled him in her lap.

‘Darling, we have made a mistake. Three worlds are under our control, it’s true, but one is still free of us, Hades. He rules alone. He has no wife. His thoughts are too clear. It is our duty to disturb his single-minded purpose. Look there, on the earth. You see the meadow? You see the daughter of Demeter, the goddess of growing things? You see Persephone picking flowers with a nymph? You see Hades, under her, beneath the earth? Take both of them with one of your arrows.’

Far below us, beneath the crust of earth, there is a vaulted land of gloom, a dismal empty place where mortals’ souls go after death. There they cross the river of forgetfulness and leave behind all memory. Their host, the host to many, magnificent, impassive, his eyes as dark and deep as open graves, is Hades. He is neither kind nor cruel.

Little Eros took an arrow from his quiver, one in a million, the surest, the sharpest of all of his shafts. He put it to his bow. His aim was true. The arrow

struck Hades' cold grey skin. Hades threw back his head with the shock. He looked up. He saw the earth and on the earth he saw a meadow, and in the meadow he saw the daughter of Demeter, the goddess of growing things, Persephone, picking flowers with a nymph. He saw her and loved her in the same moment. He was overcome, overwhelmed with lonely pain. She was his opposite in every way. She was life and he was death. Urging on his four black horses by name, he rode his chariot up and up.

In the meadow, Persephone saw a terrible wound crack the ground, a gaping gash that belched bitter fog, and through the cleft came cold grey fingers that gripped her ankle and pulled. Poor Persephone fell. She scrambled through the grass, she grasped the hand of her friend the nymph. The nymph held tightly. The nymph grabbed Persephone's dress but the dress tore. Persephone's hand slipped out of the nymph's grip. Persephone was flailing now, pulling at the loose earth round the edge of the gap, and then she was gone, into the darkness below.

The nymph was beside herself. She was overcome with shock. She sank to her knees. She put her face in her hands and wept. Her shoulders shook. Tears trickled down her arms, tears trickled down her legs. All of her, every pore of her, every cell of her, wept tears. She dissolved into tears, melted into sorrow until all that was left of her was a torn dress floating in a salty pool.

Demeter, whom we must thank for every full mouth, for every bulging belly, who wears a crown of corn around her brow; Demeter, who makes the harvests grow, who gave us the plough; Demeter, Persephone's mother, heard

whispers from the House of Rumour. Something awful had occurred. She called her daughter's name. There came no reply. She searched Mount Olympus. She descended to the earth. Neither Eos, goddess of the dawn nor Hesperus, the evening star, found her resting. The crown of corn slipped from her brow. She pulled out handfuls of her own hair. She tore her dress. Where she walked the world was blighted, sometimes by too much sun, sometimes by relentless rain.

At last, she knelt to drink from a pool and found the water salty. The nymph wanted to speak. She wanted to tell the terrible news but her lips, her tongue, her mouth were just water now. With her shifting currents she summoned the torn dress. Demeter recognised it at once. She ascended to Mount Olympus. She burst into Zeus' hall. A feast was being held. Wild-eyed, she looked around, grasping Aphrodite.

‘Three worlds are not enough! Always you must have more.’

The hall fell silent. Aphrodite said, ‘Your daughter is a queen now. She's the queen of a vast land. She sits beside the king of shadows himself. You should be proud.’

‘Proud? How can you say those words when your child is sitting in your lap? How can you scorn a mother's torment? Zeus, it's in your power. Please, give me back my child!’

Zeus put down his goblet. ‘There are forces, powers to whom even I must answer. The three sisters who live below, the Fates, have decreed your daughter will see the sun again. She will be freed, unless she has tasted Hades’ food.’

Demeter was gone, down to the earth, beneath the earth, across the river. She saw something glowing in the gloom, in the land of the dead. She called her daughter’s name. Persephone turned. Her lips were glistening, red as blood. She was holding a pomegranate. She had eaten six seeds of the pomegranate.

Demeter returned to Zeus. ‘Imagine a world where nothing green grows, a world without hope or joy, where the ground is white and brittle as bone, where no birds sing. This is not the land of the dead that I describe. This will be the land of the living unless you give me back my daughter.’

What one god or goddess has done, no other can undo. But they found a compromise. For half the year, Persephone would live here, on the earth, with her mother, and her arrival is greeted with great celebration because she brings with her warmth, light, new life. And for half the year, she goes below, into the underworld – six months for six seeds – where she is loved by the dead because she brings with her something from our world. She brings with her a little hope.

***Pictorial: Lyre Player by Frank Eugene***





## Poetry From the Past

## ***Pomegranate by D.H. Lawrence***

You tell me I am wrong.

Who are you, who is anybody to tell me I am wrong?

I am not wrong.

In Syracuse, rock left bare by the viciousness of Greek women,  
No doubt you have forgotten the pomegranate trees in flower,  
Oh so red, and such a lot of them.

Whereas at Venice,  
Abhorrent, green, slippery city  
Whose Doges were old, and had ancient eyes,  
In the dense foliage of the inner garden  
Pomegranates like bright green stone,  
And barbed, barbed with a crown.  
Oh, crown of spiked green metal  
Actually growing!

Now, in Tuscany,  
Pomegranates to warm your hands at;  
And crowns, kingly, generous, tilting crowns  
Over the left eyebrow.

And, if you dare, the fissure!

Do you mean to tell me you will see no fissure?

Do you prefer to look on the plain side?

For all that, the setting suns are open.

The end cracks open with the beginning:

Rosy, tender, glittering within the fissure.

Do you mean to tell me there should be no fissure?

No glittering, compact drops of dawn?

Do you mean it is wrong, the gold-filmed skin, integument,  
shown ruptured?

For my part, I prefer my heart to be broken.

It is so lovely, dawn-kaleidoscopic within the crack.

*Written in San Gervasio in Tuscany*

### ***Song of Solomon 4:12-15***

Come with me from Lebanon, my bride.

Leave Lebanon behind, and come.

Leave your high mountain hideaway.

Abandon your wilderness seclusion,

Where you keep company with lions

and panthers guard your safety.

You've captured my heart, dear friend.

You looked at me, and I fell in love.

One look my way and I was hopelessly in love!

How beautiful your love, dear, dear friend—

far more pleasing than a fine, rare wine,

your fragrance more exotic than select spices.

The kisses of your lips are honey, my love,

every syllable you speak a delicacy to savor.

Your clothes smell like the wild outdoors,

the fresh scent of high mountains.

Dear lover and friend, you're a secret garden,

a private and pure fountain.

Body and soul, you are paradise,

a whole orchard of succulent fruits—

Ripe apricots and peaches,

Pomegranates, oranges and pears;

Nut trees and cinnamon,

and all scented woods;

Mint and lavender,  
and all herbs aromatic;  
A garden fountain, sparkling and splashing,  
fed by spring waters from the Lebanon mountains.

***Pictorial: Something from a Mountain Hideaway***



## **Novella: To My Great Surprise**

As a man you would think as you got older you would become less desirable to women. Your hair turns grey and your masculinity falls asleep. You lose touch with *les mods du temps* and begin to appear stately and ‘old fashioned.’

For me, to my great surprise, the opposite has happened. As I enter my sixth decade, I have flourished in a rather unique fashion. How I have flourished is both hard and simple to explain. Hard in the sense it was unexpected, yet simple because, once you know the reasons why, it is uncomplicated to understand.

To set this tale on its proper course let me tell you that I am single, Catholic and heterosexual. If I didn’t tell you this up front you might be inclined to think differently as you wander into this narrative.

As a man I am more appreciated now than I was when I was half my present age. When I was in my thirties I was married to a woman who thought life was all about her. I had grown up in a family half marred by narcissism and half expressing generosity. The genes in my family had been evenly split between three people who thought life was all about themselves, and the other half – my mother, youngest sister and I – who worked hard to be *Good Samaritans*. As I grew up there was great turmoil in the family. Anyone who knows math knows that  $-1 + 1 = 0$ , and zero is hardly a balanced and encouraging number.

In my thirties, when I married, it was then that I began to realize the pain I had endured while growing up. After twelve years of indentured servitude I



finally stepped back and asked my ex to reconsider her approach to our life together. Three days later divorce papers were thrown at my feet as she tried to take me for whatever was still left inside of me. I had given her too good of a life and she felt entitled.

In short order my father in law fired my ex's lawyer and when she refused to sell the house we had lived in, claiming it her own, my father in law took a third mortgage on his house and gave me something to live on as I put my life back together. On our wedding day he had predicted his daughter and I would be married at most twelve years. I had forgotten this premonition until he reminded me of his words and then thanked me for trying so hard to teach her daughter how to be a Good Samaritan –I had failed at this impossible task.

When it was time to call it quits I was working myself to death with three jobs and she spent all her time spending the monies I was working hard to earn. Our credit cards were maxed, our mortgage barely paid and she had squirreled away tens of thousands of dollars of pretty things, for her rainy day.

Since I was at death's door I had to go see my doctor. He told me that if I kept this up any longer I would be dead by the time I was fifty. When I arrived home that afternoon I happen upon our mail, opened our credit card notices, found they had been maxed and saw the purchases ... then my ex arrived home and seemed incensed that I was not at work 'earning my keep!'

I told her why I was home early and explained that my doctor had said ... to my shock and horror all she could say was ... *'that's all right dear, we have*

*life insurance!*’ The first thing my lawyer did was cancel the life insurance policy she had on me. In his eyes it was evident that she was trying to kill me.

This is the same woman who had promised me she would work while we were married, and we would have a family (it turns out she was infertile and she knew it from the start), and well you get the picture. A few years into our married life, when she told me she did not want to have kids of her own, I suggested adoption (there was a foster home across the street from where we lived). *‘No, I don’t want any children in my house!’*

Once my little sister came visiting with her new born son. When he needed to be changed, I told my sister she could change him in the guest bedroom. My ex would not let her change the six month old anywhere in the house and suggested she go outside. *‘It was a nice spring day’* she said but that’s not the point. My sister marched to the center of the living room, changed her son and then left stating she would never visit ever again! I was appalled by my ex’s behavior ...

After my divorce, my French Canadian mother described my ex as a cuckoo and our house the cuckoo nest. It took me two decades to get over the hurt and harm she had put me through. To help bring perspective, my aged French Canadian Grandmother told me how she had had three boyfriends when she was single and explained how it was she had chosen my grandfather as a mate (a very successful match that endured until his demise, with seven happy children as a testament to their Catholic devotion). My Grandmother

recommended that I not rely too much on a single person but to have a circle of friends and acquaintances to find happiness in life.

This is philosophy I have taken to heart and even shared with many of my friends.

What has come of this philosophy? One of the first things I did when I was single again was to set myself up in a bachelor's suite and open my world to some *Bohemian* friends. In short order my suite became *The Atelier* and my friends and I began to flourish as artists. As a young boy I had grown up amidst art and creativity. My mother was an artist and a casual acquaintance of the likes of Pablo Picasso. I had stopped doing art when I got married (perhaps because I had neither the time nor energy to be creative).

The past two decades have brought me fine friendships and a new meaning to my life. I have flourished as a creative mind and free personality. It has also pulled me into an ever changing circle of creative individuals.

One of my new friends was a photographer who liked doing bodyscapes, and so I sat for some black and white pictorials, letting her do figuratives of me without including my visage. She did one pictorial titled the *Allegory of the Apple* which shows a male torso with both his masculinity and visage hidden away, holding an apple, with a breast shaped wicker basket at his feet.

Another friend wanted me to sit as an Odalisque so she could do a painting that had a dichotomic symbolism – male and female. You may wonder why

there are so few male Odalisques ... perhaps because there are so few male concubines. If you ask, the answer is no. I am Catholic after all.

My *Bohemian* friends inspired me to draw, paint and sculpt, from when I discovered my fondness for *DaDa* and Surrealism. As a birthday gift one of my artist friends gave me Lauren Stover's tome *Bohemian Manifesto: A Field Guide to Living on the Edge*, and welcome me to her world. This is very much a life style choice, but I have drawn the line at body art and piercings. Call me Man Ray ...

In short order more and more of my artist friends invited me to sit for them. If you visit the *Atelier* you will find a number of fascinating costumes: A Minotaur's head (a tribute to Picasso), a Trident, gold drapery and a crown in the style of *Poseidon*, a toga, sword and shield in the style of a Greek soldier, a long lance in the style of the Roman spearman, a bow, quiver and arrow for *Eros* and a sling-shot for Michelangelo's *David* ... whenever my artist friends ask (almost all of them are women) and wish to explore the dichotomy of the human condition, I indulge them.

Art is art! It is wonderful to be desired as *un objet d'art*. I let them decide whether they wish me to be draped, semi-draped or figurative.

One day as I sat for the woman artist who had done the Odalisque of me in her studio, she took out a meter stick to see how Vitruvian I am (in the style of Leonardo's Vitruvian Man) and declared "you are perfectly Vitruvian!" Word got out into the *Bohemian* world that I was perfectly proportioned and

in short order I was invited to sit as an artist's model for artists at a dozen different studios around town. All but one of these artists were women. All but one desired me in the figurative.

I should perhaps tell you that I am modest when I sit for artists in their studios and turtle when I do (you can figure out the meaning of turtling ...). I suspect this is one of the 'other reasons' why, beyond being Vitruvian, I have become a popular model with artist. It is sort of like being out of sight, but not out of mind.

Over the past decade I myself have produced over a hundred pieces of art. This creativity has brought me new meaning in my life and has brought me great happiness. I have also find the spirit to write prose and poetry and won accolades for these efforts. Now, a day cannot go by without me being creative. I feel an emptiness in my heart and soul if I am not imaginative, *DaDa* and Surreal.

It took suffering for me to understand this. Isn't it said that great art only comes through great suffering? My life today is immensely *Bohemian* and immensely happy. I have flourished as an artist.

Over the past few years I have had a great deal of fun as well. About five years ago I entered and won a burlesque contest called *Rent Cheque*. My seven minute routine was performed to the music *Gabriel's Oboe* from the film *The Mission* played on the cello by Yo Yo Ma. All I did is go through the motions of getting ready to and then sit as an artist's model. I teased the

audience with my Vitruvian form. For the last minute of my routine all I wore was a red feather, strategically placed, which the audience coaxed me to let flutter to the ground ... the roar at the end of my routine went right through me like the thunder of a jet engine and triggered an anxiety attack ... nope I am never going to do something like that again. Really ... I won't!

The next day I gave the \$ 500 first prize to two impoverished artist friends who just had a baby boy. Yes ... I was on a Mission to win them the prize money. They were too proud to accept a gift that came directly out of my pocket, but happily took up this gift that came out of the pockets of others.

Over the past decade I have sat as an artist model on perhaps one hundred different occasions at a dozen studios. I have lost count as to the number of artists who have rendered me. Today I sit twice a month for students at teaching studios helping them prepare their portfolios for submission to art school. I am told I am their favorite model. Since I am an artist in my own right, I know how to help these students get the most out of a life drawing session. Since I turtle they hardly notice that I *sans habillment* and so can focus on the Vitruvian in their midst.

Recently I sat for three hours at a teaching a studio with eight elderly artists where I was by far the youngest person in the studio. It was a unique experience. I walk five kilometers a day and so my form is quite muscular. I was amused when two women artists fought each other for the right to sit behind me to render me from behind.

In the past few years I have found occasion to make submissions to photography, film, art and writer's calls at *Intercompetition*, an online bulletin board for creative people. Last year my artist friends and I submitted twenty two works to the calls, including an eight minute film to the NASA – Cinespace film call in Houston, a challenge to make a nano-machine that will produce perfect copies of snowflakes. Submissions were also made to contests in Europe, Japanese, the US and Canada. To a photographic call in Spain went a pictorial a *Minotaur in his Lair* (as a tribute to Picasso and his Vollard Suite). A call in the US was for designs for fancy socks. It is enjoyable to know what is asked of you and have a deadline for it brings purpose to your artistic efforts.

So far this year my artist friends have made eight submissions, the most recent being three experimental films to a Swiss film call: *But Soft What Light* (a humorous narrative about my experiences being ask to play Romeo opposite an amorous Juliet in my middle school years), *My First Space Walk* ( a narrative about my remembrances of a four year old getting into the excitement of Gemini 4 and the first American Space Walk by Ed White) and *Clarity* (a silent film with a bottle of bubbles the visual and a narrative about the great cycle of life ...). Together the three films are 45 minutes in duration.

Next comes a submission to a wearable art call from New Zealand, then a DaDa painting, some amorous poetry and this essay to the theme *Flourish*.

I have a confession to make, before you end reading my story. Another reason why I sit as an artist's model is because I live in chronic pain, pain that only

the endorphins of constant pleasure can treat. When I was twenty I hurt my neck and spine at sea serving aboard one of her Majesty's ships while saving the life of an officer cadet. As a matter of choice I refuse to take pain killers. I want my head to remain clear so that I can be creative and imaginative. Experience has taught me that the best way to combat chronic pain is to pursue constant pleasure.

I am now immensely happy and immensely *Bohemian*. Never one to be held back by life's misfortune, I enjoy my contemporary life to its fullest and have flourished both as an artist and a man.





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